

What is claimed is:

1. A method comprising:

2. determining at a first location if a classification

3. parameter is available for Internet Protocol security (IPsec)

4. traffic that indicates a route for the IPsec traffic;

5. if a classification parameter is not available,

6. decrypting the IPsec traffic at a second location if the IPsec

7. traffic is encrypted and determining the classification

8. parameter for the IPsec traffic at the second location; and

9. forwarding the IPsec traffic based on the classification

10. parameter.

2. The method of claim 1 further comprising receiving

the IPsec traffic at the first location.

3. The method of claim 1 in which the classification

parameter includes a security parameter index (SPI) associated

with the IPsec traffic.

4. The method of claim 1 in which the IPsec traffic

includes a data packet.

5. The method of claim 1 further comprising forwarding

other IPsec traffic included in a traffic stream with the

IPsec traffic based on the classification parameter.

1 6. An article comprising:
2 a machine-readable medium which stores machine-executable
3 instructions, the instructions causing a machine to:
4 determine at a first mechanism if a classification
5 parameter is available for Internet Protocol security (IPsec)
6 traffic that indicates a route for the IPsec traffic;
7 if a classification parameter is not available,
8 decrypt the IPsec traffic at a second mechanism if the IPsec
9 traffic is encrypted and determine the classification
10 parameter for the IPsec traffic at the second mechanism; and
11 forward the IPsec traffic based on the
12 classification parameter.

1 7. The article of claim 6 further causing a machine to
2 receive the IPsec traffic at the first mechanism.

1 8. The article of claim 6 in which the classification
2 parameter includes a security parameter index (SPI) associated
3 with the IPsec traffic.

1 9. The article of claim 6 in which the IPsec traffic
2 includes a data packet.

1 10. The article of claim 6 further causing a machine to
2 forward other IPsec traffic included in a traffic stream with
3 the IPsec traffic based on the classification parameter.

1 11. A system comprising:

2 a first mechanism configured to communicate with a
3 network, to determine if a classification parameter that
4 indicates a route for a traffic stream is available for a
5 packet included in the traffic stream; and

6 a second mechanism configured to receive the packet from
7 the first mechanism, to perform an encryption procedure on the
8 packet if the packet is encrypted and associated with a known
9 encryption-related key, and, if the classification parameter
10 is available, to forward the packet based on the route for the
11 traffic stream.

1 12. The system of claim 11 further comprising a third
2 mechanism configured to communicate with the first mechanism
3 and with the second mechanism and to determine a
4 classification parameter for the packet if a classification
5 parameter is not available.

1 13. The system of claim 12 in which the second mechanism
2 is also configured to forward the packet to the third
3 mechanism if the packet is not associated with a known
4 encryption-related key.

1 14. The system of claim 12 in which the third mechanism
2 is also configured to, after determining the classification

3 parameter for the packet, forward the classification parameter
4 to the first mechanism.

1 15. The system of claim 12 in which the third mechanism
2 is also configured to, after determining the
3 encryption-related key for the packet, forward the
4 encryption-related key to the second mechanism so that the
5 second mechanism can perform the encryption-related procedure.

1 16. The system of claim 12 in which the second mechanism
2 and the third mechanism are both included as part of a fourth
3 mechanism.

1 17. The system of claim 11 further comprising a
2 plurality of additional mechanisms, each additional mechanism
3 configured to communicate with the first mechanism, to perform
4 an encryption procedure on the packet if the packet is
5 encrypted and associated with a known encryption-related key,
6 and, if the classification parameter is available, to forward
7 the packet based on the route for the traffic stream.

1 18. The system of claim 11 in which the packet includes
2 an Internet Protocol security data packet.

1 19. The system of claim 11 in which the traffic stream
2 includes a plurality of Internet Protocol security data
3 packets.

1 20. The system of claim 11 in which the first mechanism
2 is also configured to forward the packet to the second
3 mechanism if the packet is encrypted.

1 21. The system of claim 11 in which the route for the
2 traffic stream includes a route through a network.

1 22. The system of claim 21 in which the network includes
2 an Internet.

1 23. The system of claim 11 in which the encryption
2 procedure includes encrypting the packet.

1 24. The system of claim 11 in which the encryption
2 procedure includes decrypting the packet.

1 25. The system of claim 11 further comprising another
2 mechanism configured to receive the packet from the second
3 mechanism and to forward the packet based on the route to an
4 ultimate destination of the packet.

1 26. The system of claim 11 in which the first mechanism
2 is also configured to route packets included in the traffic
3 stream based on a load balancing scheme.